

## BIKES FOR CONNECTING WITH NATURE



Frank Varga / Skagit Valley Herald

**From left, Isabel Cruz, 12, Maycol Ibanez, 13, and Daniella Becerra, 10, stand with their reward bikes** Friday evening at a pot luck dinner celebration at LaVenture Middle School in Mount Vernon for the North Cascades Institute's Neighborhood Kids Program. The program engages youths in the Kulshan Creek community, ages 8-14, in a variety of outdoor activities including field trips and after-school activities. The program, in partnership with the National Forest Service, Mount Vernon Police Department, Skagit Youth and Family Services, and the National Park Service, has a goal of connecting youths with nature and helping them understand their place in the environment. The youngsters, all from Mount Vernon, were awarded the bikes for taking the highest number of field trips.